Warden's Version

How Jackson Was Killed

George Jackson was killed by a bullet that traveled 271 feet in an "almost horizontal" trajectory, San Quentin Warden Louis S. Nelson disclosed today.

Nelson explained that Jackson, who sparked an abortive escape attempt Aug. 7 in shich he, two trusty inmates and three guards were killed, had been hit in the left ankle by another bullet only seconds earlier.

As the warden reconstructed the action today, Jackson and a fellow-convict, John Larry Spain, dashed out of San Quentin's adjustment center about 2:30 p.m., leaving the dead men behind.

Running to Wall

Running toward the north wall, swerving to the left and to the right, Jackson came immediately into view of an armed guard at Gun Post 1, Nelson said.

That guard, on a balcony about 175 feet to the east, had already been alerted by a shout of "inmate with gun" — but neither he nor the guard who fired the fatal shot knew the convict was Jackson, the warden said.

The balcony guard fired the shot that struck Jackson in the ankle, and reported that he saw the fugitive as he "stumbled, fell to one knee, and then regained his balance."

Second Guard Fires

Jackson disappeared from that man's field of view, but he and Spain then entered the view of a second armed guard who had taken a prone position atop the gun wall to the south.

The second guard, too, reported Jackson "appeared to stumble, hit the ground, and then start running again," Nelson said.

Seeing a weapon in Jackson's hand, the second guard fired "seconds later" as the convict ran in a "crouched" style, he continued. Spain took cover in some bushes and was not hurt.

Coroner's Report

A final coroner's report by Dr. Donovan O. Cooke said a high-velocity bullet struck Jackson in the middle of the back, hit two ribs and traveled on through the top of the skull. That was a reversal of the direction of the preliminary autopsy report, also made by Cooke.

Nelson cited scale drawings to show that the shot fired by the guard prone on the wall traveled almost parallel to the ground across the 271-foot distance.

He declined to name either of the guards involved. Their accounts, he said, are contained in a three-inch-thick report on the outbreak that has been compiled by prison authorities.